

ened with growing problems with

The four-week moving average

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## Preacher going to high court over college's limit on speaking space

BY KEN KUSMER

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A campus evangelist restricted by Vincennes University to a walkway in front of the student union is appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court in hopes of being able to preach again on a lawn outside the school's library.

James "Brother Jim" Gilles, who is being represented by the Christian public-interest group Alliance Defense Fund, asked the court on Tuesday to hear his appeal of a 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals order in February siding with the state-supported junior college.

Gilles, an Evansville native now based in Symsonia, Ky., said he was fighting a growing trend among universities to limit free speech by requiring evangelists to be invited or relegating them to isolated areas of campuses.

"It was not real conducive to drawing a crowd," Gilles, who claims to have preached on 333 campuses in 49 states and six countries since 1982, said Wednesday during a telephone interview from Evansville.

University attorney Dan Siewers said it will argue the case does

not deserve to be heard by the nation's highest court.

"All we asked him to do was to use the area in front of the student union. It isn't some isolated, out-of-the-way area where no one goes," Siewers said.

The case dates to 2001, when Gilles — described in the appeals court's Feb. 14 opinion as using "a confrontational style that includes calling people in the crowd names" — entered the campus uninvited and began preaching, sparking a disturbance in which campus police officers felt he was in danger.

The university later adopted a policy on campus sales and solicitations requiring outsiders to obtain prior approval from the dean of students and then limit their activities to the brick patio in front of the student union.

Nathan Kellum, an attorney for the Arizona-based Alliance Defense Fund, said federal appeals courts have given differing opinions on the propriety of speech restrictions on public college campuses, and he expressed confidence the Supreme Court would agree to hear the case.

"It's about the right of a Christian to share his beliefs on public

property, just like anyone else," said Kellum, of Memphis, Tenn.

He also said Gilles was doing nothing more provocative than starting a dialogue with students.

"There were different points of view, but it was always cordial," Kellum said.

The appeals court decision, written by Judge Richard Posner, said the university was within its rights to protect its property from uninvited guests.

"Vincennes University has placed the lawn completely off limits to uninvited outsiders, and if it can't do that without violating the Constitution, universities cannot control their property," Posner wrote.

Kellum said he expected the Supreme Court to decide in three to four months whether to accept the case.

Gilles said he has sued several universities over restricting his ability to evangelize on their campuses. He sued Kentucky's Murray State University in federal court last fall for denying him speaking privileges at that school's student center since 2004.

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He said that any other city

"hillbilly heroin" in drug-ridden Appalachian states like Kentucky,

cording to the state medical examiner's annual report. Oxyco-

A quarter of the 168 overdose deaths examine by the state medi-

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